DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 210 562 CE 030 891

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TITLE A Handbook for Cooperative Planning and Cooperative Arrangements in Adult Basic Education.
INSTITUTION National Association for Industry - Education Cooperation, Buffalo, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY New York State Education Dept., Albany. Div. of Continuing Education.
PUB DATE Jul 81
NOTE 27p.

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Basic Education; *Community Cooperation; Community Involvement; *Community Resources; *Cooperative Planning; Program Design; Program Development; Program Evaluation; *Program Implementation; School Community Relationship
IDENTIFIERS *Resource Utilization

ABSTRACT

This handbook for adult basic education (ABE) program operators is designed to provide an understanding of procedures involved in establishing or improving ABE/cooperative planning and arrangements (CP&A). It is organized around four major topics. Chapter 1 overviews community resource utilization in ABE programs. A systems approach to cooperative planning is described in chapter 2. It covers determining and securing support, establishing a community advisory group, cooperative planning and design of programs, and the organizational context in cooperative planning. Chapter 3 outlines procedures used in implementing cooperative arrangements: staff orientation, public information activities, targeting cooperative arrangements to specific needs, recruitment strategies, resource person selection, community resource utilization, orientation and placement of resource persons, community resource persons. Chapter 4 describes a comprehensive evaluation system. (YLB)

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A HANDBOOK FOR COOPERATIVE PLANNING AND COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

by

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Prepared for

The Division of Continuing Education
New York State Department of Education

Developed by

The National Association for Industry-Education Cooperation (NAIEC)
Buffalo, New York

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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July 1981

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FORWARD

Cooperative planning and arrangements (CP&A) involving volunteer community resources offer adult basic education (ABE) a creative response to the challenges of the 1980's. ABE program operators must share their concerns for designing and maintaining adult basic education programs. Giving visibility to effective community-ABE cooperative stategies and working arrangements will increase the effective use of business/industry/labor/government/professional/community agency inputs. The process can assist adult students to make the transition from the classroom to a productive role in the community and the workplace.

The need for establishing CP&A in maintaining and improving the effectiveness of ABE programs takes on added importance in view of the current trend toward fiscal conservatism and program accountability. Organized, structured community linkages can provide support services needed by special populations to improve the probability of success in regular ABE programs, particularly in the urban centers in New York State.

CP&A can make ABE programs meet community needs more effectively. Successfully integrated community resource persons can serve as advocates at a time when financial resources are limited.

The results of using ABE/CP&A depends upon the intended scope of the volunteer program, community response and needs, and managerial effectiveness. The Handbook will assist ABE program operators to develop and implement programs responsive to local needs and resources.

PREFACE

Handbook Development

This handbook has been prepared based on information gathered during a search of related literature, contributions of ABE practitioners, input from the Project Advisory Committee, and the ideas of industry-education coordinators considered most appropriate for operators of ABE programs, primarily those in urban centers.

The Handbook is organized around four major topics: (1) overview of community resource utilization in ABE programs; (2) cooperative planning; a systems approach; (3) implementing cooperative arrangements; and (4) program evaluation. Each of these topics is described in sufficient detail to provide the reader with an understanding of the procedures involved in establishing or improving ABE/CP&A.

The Handbook will assist ABE program operators to identify and clarify skills of innovative leadership for the management of volunteer community resource activity.

It will also introduce new practices and emerging ideas about ABE cooperative planning/arrangements.

The Handbook can be used by either educational institutions or community based organizations (CBO) offering ABE programs. It does not presuppose that ABE operators have had any previous experience in the process.

I. UTILIZING THE COMMUNITY RESOURCE BASE IN ABE PROGRAMS: AN OVERVIEW

The Nature of Community-Education Cooperative Planning/Arrangements

Cooperative planning and arrangements with the broader community is not unusual in small, part-time or large full-time ABE programs. ABE has a long history of involving community representatives in planning and implementing programs. Other terminology is frequently used in referring to this process such as linkages, partnerships, industry-education cooperation, voluntarism, and the collaboration process.

However, this type of assistance has too often been conducted on a fragmented, duplicative or ad hoc basis. As a result, there is a need to develop an organizational structure and process to facilitate the involvement of community resource persons.

In contrast to individual efforts that utilize community resources, the establishment of an ABE/CP&A program involves a three phase model including 1) planning and design, 2) implementation and operation and 3) monitoring and evaluation. This represents a unified, not fragmented, approach to integrating community resource persons in various capacities.

Any competent, interested individual can serve as an ABE volunteer. Successful volunteers represent a wide age range and varied personal characteristics. The individuals, agencies, institutions, and organizations representing business, industry, labor, government, the professions, and the non-profit community are commonly referred to as "the broader community."

These efforts vary in level of intensity ranging from informal relationships involving few resources and infrequent communications, to the more formal collaborative process which involves significant transfer of resources, on-going communication, substantial coordination, and an appropriate allocation of time.

Contributions/Benefits

A number of benefits can be derived from this process which will assist program operators to fulfill local needs. Advocates of community-education cooperation agree that volunteer human resources:

- enrich participant experiences and heighten their motivation leading to a better retention rate;
- free staff from non-teaching tasks and assist in the provision of individualized instruction;
- help in student recruitment and the securing of supportive services;
- provide assistance in administration and instruction;
- contribute to program economy and efficiency;
- provide an opportunity to share ideas, raise questions, gain access to special people, and exchange information and understanding; and
- enhance program visibility through close ties established with business, industry, labor, government, the professions, and community agencies.

These factors are interrelated and each benefit obtained from this process helps to build the base for meeting other program needs.

II. COOPERATIVE PLANNING: A SYSTEMS APPROACH

The Planning Function

Planning is the most important managerial function involved in successful implementation of a program. Thorough cooperative planning:

- creates a supportive climate,
- determines the specific needs for volunteer community resource persons,
- develops program goals and objectives responsive to local needs,
- identifies and obtains the appropriate resources necessary for program implementation, and
- determines several procedures which will be employed throughout the operation of the program to include evaluation.

The planning process also provides an opportunity to identify and resolve potential problems associated with program implementation. Each problem resolution will impact on the subsequent success of the program.

Determining/Securing Support

A. Administrative Support

The approval and cooperation of ABE program operators and policy makers, who are ultimately responsible for the programs, are required. Without administrative endorsement there is little likelihood of gaining support of the school or CBO board, faculty, and potential volunteer community resource persons — all of whom will be directly involved in the program.

B. Faculty Support

The cooperation and support of faculty is also essential during the planning phase of the program. Faculty support can be enhanced by involving them in the planning process. It is important to explain how volunteers will respond to their needs and to emphasize how the process can contribute to program quality.

C. Community Support

Early community involvement increases the likelihood that

local organizations will participate during the implementation phase. Community organizations such as the State Employment Service, Chambers of Commerce, Literacy Volunteers, Comprehensive Employment and Training Programs, county social service departments, National Alliance of Business, local urban coalitions, industry-education councils, and local business firms and labor organizations can provide valuable support. Avoid alienating any group whose support is important.

Establishing a Community Advisory Group

Involvement of administrators, faculty and local organizations can be accomplished by forming a community advisory committee or council. Such a committee enables the broader community to help in planning and implementing better programs. An advisory committee should represent the talents and knowledge of concerned citizens, ABE staff, representatives of business, industry, organized labor, local government, the news media, employment service, community organizations, higher education and minority groups. ABE students, especially recent graduates of the program, are also an invaluable resource.

An ABE community advisory committee can be utilized most effectively by providing the group with a clear statement of purpose, the work expected, and an understanding of the limits or extent of its authority. The roles, duties and responsibilities of an advisory group should focus on involvement in the policies, purposes, goals, objectives and criteria associated with the program.

Cooperative Program Planning and Design

There is a general consensus that cooperative planning and design of programs involving a community advisory committee involves the following steps:

(1) **Development of Awareness and Commitment** — A precursor is the creation of a climate supportive of community participation in the planning function. This conducive climate will require commitment of administrators, faculty and community.

(2) **Conducting a Needs Assessment** — Determining or assessing needs of adult learners is a vital, yet difficult, part of program planning and design. It is tempting to rely on familiar methods and to equate what is popularly and vocally demanded for what is needed. However, planners are responsible for creating opportunities for adults to grow. At times growth may depend on identifying the most critical, not necessarily the most popular, adult educational needs.

Determining the needs consists of gathering information about a potential ABE program by analyzing both the requirements of the adult learner audience and the cost-effectiveness of the program. These activities result in a decision to proceed or not to proceed with planning the program. Thus, needs assessment is not an end in itself, but an integral part of program planning. The information gathered can be used, for example, to plan:

- objectives
- learning activities
- marketing strategies
- utilization of community resources
- evaluation efforts

The needs assessment process enables the "broader community", represented in an advisory committee, to provide input into program planning, which should enhance subsequent utilization of community resources. As a result of the needs assessment, efforts of the committee will provide concrete information upon which to determine the potential scope of activities to be performed by volunteers.

In conducting a needs assessment, it is important that representatives of all relevant groups participate in the identification of needs. The needs assessment should probe for information on various types of administrative and support services which may contribute to overall program effectiveness. Examples of these services might include:

- assisting in development of new curricula
- assisting in career guidance and counseling
- assisting in personal guidance
- assisting in curriculum modificaton for handicapped or disadvantaged students
- job search skills
- occupational survival skills
- job placement

It may be appropriate to include additional items when assessing the needs of ABE administrators and instructors, since their needs for assistance are not likely to be known by members of the community advisory group. For example, to what extent could community resources assist them in:

- monitoring student performance?
- preparing accountability reports?
- improving community relations?
- recruiting new students?
- following up on program completers?

- communicating with limited English-speaking students or potential students?

A mailed or telephone survey conducted within the area of service can be useful in collecting needs assessment data. The survey should gather the necessary information as quickly and concisely as possible with minimal inconvenience. Topics on the questionnaire should be determined by the members of the advisory committee, with an appropriate introduction explaining the purpose of the questionnaire and its use in planning an ABE program. The assessment should provide baseline data for determining the most pressing needs for using the community resources in implementing the program.

(3) **Preparation of Program Goals and Objectives** — Once the needs have been identified, the committee is in a position to assist staff to develop goals and objectives for program implementation. Goals and objectives should flow from a well-defined statement of purpose which:

- identifies clients to be served;
- identifies in general terms what will be done for the clients;
- provides broad limits for program activity;
- tells why the program came into being;
- states these facts without reference to specific dates.

After the purpose statement has been formulated, goals and objectives can be determined in terms of what specific outcomes are intended within designated times. Goals and objectives can be developed cooperatively with the assistance of the total committee or a subgroup. When a subgroup is involved, further input can be obtained by mailing draft goal and objective statements to other committee members, as well as other groups and individuals whose reviews are desired. Reactions to the statements can be summarized, compared, discussed, and appropriate modifications made.

Goals and objectives can be determined by applying small group techniques such as brainstorming, using the results of the needs assessment as input to the group session. In finalizing goals and objectives, the following should be considered:

- Goals and objectives related to utilizing community resources should be consistent and compatible with the philosophy of adult basic education within the district or CBO.
- Goals and objectives should be appropriate and realistic.
- Goal statements should designate the general purpose or intent of the goal and what is to be accomplished.

- Objective statements should identify specific targets, time frame and results that can be measured to determine the extent to which they are achieved.

(4) **Identification of Resources** — Once goals and objectives have been determined, the resources needed to accomplish the goals and objectives should be identified and their roles, duties and responsibilities clarified. Determining the scope of volunteer services needed will provide the basis for a recruitment plan that specifies sources and procedures for securing the appropriate resources.

Two primary questions must be addressed during this step: What does the program need and what will the staff accept? With respect to the latter, staff acceptance of volunteers in adult basic education is likely to be greatest where the roles are cleary defined so as not to conflict with, and impose a threat to, paid personnel. To avoid such a problem, it is important for paid personnel to be involved actively in the planning process.

(5) **Design of Program** — Program design involves identifying the activities required to achieve goals and objectives. This necessitates the development of administrative procedures and orientation of staff. More specifically, program design includes:

- approval from officials whose cooperation is mandatory or desirable;
- identification of services to be provided by volunteers;
- a statement on the duties and responsibilities of volunteers and methods for recruitment;
- development of procedures for montoring, evaluation and future needs assessments; and
- formulation of a plan for promoting the program to the general public.

The Organizational Context in Cooperative Planning

Cooperative planning can be enhanced by the participation of an advisory committee. The committee provides the appropriate organizational context in which community representatives and ABE program operators can reach a consensus on the important decisions which leads to the following advantages:

(1) A committee of knowledgeable community representatives who are interested in adult basic education can *stimulate interest* among the target audience. Their involvement increases the likelihood that potential adult learners will see it as useful.

(2) Ideally, committee members are selected because of their knowledge of adult basic education. Program operators will be exposed to different *ideas and perspectives* from represen-

tatives of the broader community which will significantly enhance program quality.

(3) Committee members with high visibility in the community give *credibility*. Their names on a brochure or announcement and the volunteer support provided are valuable to program image among the ABE target audience.

(4) An advisory committee can play a key role in identifying and recruiting volunteer resources and relating experiences with other community-based projects to assist in *cooperative planning and cooperative arrangements*.

(5) The committee can *evaluate program effectiveness* by commenting on the evaluation design and examining the results.

Unless potential problems in using a community advisory committee are resolved, the committee may control program direction rather than contribute to its effectiveness.

1. The *size* of an advisory committee can be a disadvantage. Where the group is too small, the diversity of ideas may be limited. Too many members can be counterproductive to committee cooperative planning. The size of a committee is determined by the needs of the community being served.
2. Depending on the size and composition of the community advisory committee, it is possible to lose *control* of the group and the *direction* it takes. Strong minded individuals with differing ideas of where the program ought to be going need effective leadership by the program operator.
3. Members need a clear understanding of the *tasks* and the *limits* to their activities. The program operator, working through the committee chairperson, has the responsibility for determining how far the group should go and for urging it to stay on course.
4. Convening *meetings* of busy community representatives in which the whole group is represented and covering an *agenda* within a short period of time poses problems. The program operator may be required to allocate extra time and effort in bringing committee members together for cooperative planning.
5. There are a range of positive and negative *expectations* on the part of both the program operator and the committee with respect to cooperative planning. For example, what type of assistance does the ABE program operator expect? The advisory group may feel it has a more responsible or less responsible role than that anticipated by the program operator.

These potential problems require a clarification of the roles, duties and reponsibilities of an ABE community advisory committee.

III. IMPLEMENTING COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Implementing ABE cooperative activities is a continuing process. It includes translating broad goals into measurable objectives; establishing priorities; identifying what must be done to get desired results; allocating human and material resources; specifying when each activity must occur; and evaluating progress at scheduled check points. Implementing planned activities occurs at the institutional or organizational level and the individual level.

Individuals from different school districts or CBO's can develop community linkages involving the use of volunteer resource persons with or without institutional commitment. However, without institutional commitment, ABE-community cooperation is limited in its impact on both practice and policy. Based on the experience of existing ABE programs in New York State, some collaborative activities have been developed in both large and small programs. What is needed in adult basic education, however, is an organized coordinated program of utilizing volunteer community resources with institutional commitment to maximize student learning opportunities.

The following sections of this Handbook outline the procedures used in establishing or improving ABE cooperative arrangements.

Staff Orientation

Staff must be oriented in terms of a well structured, coordinated approach to using volunteer community resources as well as the potential roles which they could play to improve program quality. This is an opportunity to gain early support and interest of the professional staff. Subsequent staff orientations conducted by the program operator can expand support and assist staff members in working effectively with volunteers.

The following are typical objectives of ABE staff orientation:

1. Acquaint staff with the goals and structure of a program of community linkages.
2. Identify areas of curriculum or program activities, such as recruitment and support services which can be carried out by community resource persons under professional supervision.
3. Inform staff members of techniques for fostering sound interpersonal relationships with community volunteers.

4. Explain the need for evaluation leading to program improvement.

Procedures used to orient staff should be tailored for local circumstances. Among the procedures cited as potential methods for providing staff orientation are regularly scheduled staff meetings, in-service training, newsletter articles, periodic workshops and special sessions with both staff and community resources in attendance.

Public Information Activities

While staff orientation assists in creating a climate which will support community cooperative arrangements, public information activities serve a similar function outside the ABE sites. The community is the source of volunteer resource persons who will be recruited, and the success of the recruitment efforts will depend on the relationship developed between the program and community.

Many ABE practitioners know that community cooperative arrangements are good, but some have difficulty making them work. A program operator who maintains on-going contact with various sectors of the community will never lack in attracting community participation in the program and will enhance the recruitment effort — as potential students become aware of where they can satisfy their basic education needs.

Community support should be cultivated during the planning phase and nurtured throughout all scheduled activities. Community representatives should be recognized for their contributions and kept informed of progress. Other leaders and groups should also be informed of the purpose and potential benefits of the program.

Public information activities can *begin shortly before recruitment* of community resource persons and continue on a regular basis. In order to familiarize the broader community about the ABE program information, the following should be disseminated:

- **Why** adult basic education is valuable to the community in meeting individual adult needs;
- **Who** is served by the program — a profile of the ABE student;
- **What** are the goals, curriculum, and methodology;
- **How** the teaching/learning process for adults differs from the education of children;
- **Where** the facilities are located; and
- **How** the ABE program could be enhanced with the effective utilization of community resources.

Program visibility can be promoted through newspaper articles, radio and television news coverage and public information programs, billboards, bumper stickers and posters. An operator must answer inquiries which result from a public awareness campaign since volunteers may lose interest if inquiries are not attended to promptly.

Other recommended community relations activities include:

- hosting on-site public information activities, providing visitors, including newspaper reporters with an opportunity to see the operation first-hand. This would include arrangements for a breakfast, lunch, or evening refreshments.
- attending social functions of community leaders, agency staff, news media, and/or political organizations.
- arranging to be represented on a number of highly visible committees, and on the boards of civic groups, such as an industry-education council, Urban League, Chamber of Commerce, and area employment and training agencies.
- listing the ABE program in all community resources guides or directories.
- using graduation ceremonies to recognize the achievements of adult learners. A reception held before the ceremony for members of the advisory committee and other community agencies and organizations can stimulate interest of prospective students in adult basic education. Be sure to invite the press.
- disseminating ABE data to existing and potential volunteer community agencies and organizations citing reading score gains and pass rate on the high school equivalency test (GEDT), along with data showing adults performing better at work or a specific activity after completing the ABE program.

Maintain good relations with representatives of the broader community. The alienation of a single group can have a multiplier effect with other community organizations which can be counterproductive.

Targeting Cooperative Arrangements to Specific Needs

A preliminary assessment of needs determines the various types of community cooperative arrangements required. As the program enters the implementation phase, it will be necessary to identify specific needs for community resource assistance associated with such areas as:

1. **Recruitment** — assistance in recruiting undereducated adults could be sought through interagency referral (e.g., the Employment Service and co-sponsorship of classes with organizations that need ABE to enhance their operations). Co-

sponsors can meet the need for classroom space and serve as a source of students (e.g., employers releasing their employees with pay to attend the ABE program).

2. **Supportive services** — cooperative arrangements with public and private agencies can provide supportive services such as employability skills training and job placement and day care service and free transportation.
3. **Supplemental operating funds** — some community organizations are able to contribute classroom space, furniture and materials to the program and contract for ABE services, thereby generating additional financial resources for the program.
4. **Classroom activities** — assistance could be requested for tutorial services, special teaching and demonstration sessions, evaluation of student progress, increasing the capability to provide individualized attention to handicapped/disadvantaged students, development of individual learning objectives.
5. **Instructional materials and curriculum development** — assistance might be sought in designing learning experiences, developing competency-based instructional modules, identifying employability skills, furnishing books, pamphlets, and other printed materials providing instructional resources and curricula to meet needs of special populations;
6. **Vocational counseling and guidance** — assistance in this area includes tutoring in career decision-making skills, assisting students in obtaining on-the-job training through cooperative internship programs, test administration and scoring, development of career and occupational information resources, including bias-free counseling materials, special assistance to those with unique needs, development of employment opportunities, placement of program completers in jobs and leading field trips to potential employment settings in business and industry.
7. **Administration** — volunteer resource persons could be used to assist in assessing needs of local employers, evaluating program impact, preparing annual reports and collecting, processing, and reporting data.

Staff support could be difficult to maintain. In particular, faculty expectations of forthcoming assistance may exceed the capabilities of the recruitment process, especially where instructors request specialized community resource assistance. The initial orientation of faculty

members must strike a balance between stimulating interest and avoiding disappointment caused by unmet expectations.

Recruitment Strategies

Following the process of assessing needs, the program operator can develop recruiting procedures. Recruitment is the process by which contact is made with individuals or organizations who are potential sources of volunteer services.

The components of a successful recruitment effort include information on the types of community resource services needed, knowledge of where to locate human resources who can provide those services, and developing strategies for enlisting the support of volunteers. Recruiting approaches described in the following categories were, in part, previously cited under public information activities:

Individual: telephone calls, word of mouth, school district or CBO newsletters or flyers, direct mailings.

Group: open houses, speaker's bureau, meetings, brochures, bulletin boards.

Public: newspapers, radio, television, posters, exhibits, volunteer bureaus.

When a limited number of cooperative arrangements are planned, or when specific skills are required which are available through a limited number of people in the community, the direct individual approach can be productive. However, when activities do not require unique skills or experience, group and public techniques may be more appropriate.

Identification can be facilitated by contacting organizations and groups for referrals and personal recommendations. These groups might include:

- industry-education councils
- business firms (small neighborhood business and large companies and corporations)
- labor unions
- employment and training agencies
- local volunteer bureaus/action centers
- fraternal organizations, men's clubs
- women's clubs and organizations
- National Alliance of Business
- charitable organizations
- governmental agencies
- local chambers of commerce
- senior citizen groups

- local post-secondary institutions
- professional, technical, trade associations
- inter- and intra-business and industrial consortium committees unique to various communities, for example, shopping mall associations

The ABE representative in contacting local employers will often be allowed to talk to employees regarding volunteer service. Some employers provide released time for employees who serve as community resources to educational programs.

Operators using the direct individual approach can capitalize on existing contacts. Memberships in a church or social organization, for example, might provide an opportunity for obtaining space or volunteer tutors. Previous employment contacts may also be useful.

The indirect group and public approaches allow for only one-way communication between the program and prospective volunteer resources. These approaches are capable of informing large numbers of persons and can be very effective when used with direct community resource recruitment efforts, since they alert prospective individuals and organizations about the program prior to contact by the ABE representative.

However, these approaches pose problems. They require that community volunteeers take the initiative in making further contact and where specific skills or services are needed, these indirect approaches can attract a disproportionate number of volunteer resources who do not match the needs of the program. A selective approach to recruitment is better than a mass media general approach in addressing specific needs.

The following is, in summary, a recommended strategy for recruiting volunteer community resources:

1. Plan recruiting far enough in advance to define types of community resouces needed and to allow time for locating them.
2. Define the target population.
3. Advertise and promote locally, describing the tasks involved. Visit agencies and organizations and use local media by offering them human interest stories about students and alumni.
4. Categorize responses to the recruiting effort according to the method that brought each of them into the program.

Resource Person Selection

When searching for volunteers, consider whether it is more important to have these resource persons represent groups or organizations or serve as individuals. Either way, there is a need to establish criteria for a variety of situations. Possible criteria include persons who:

- express interest in adult basic education;

- indicate their intention and ability to prepare for specific events;
- represent varied disciplines and experiences;
- are active and knowledgeable in specific content areas; and;
- have demonstrated capablilty for dealing with problems and issues.

Community Resource Utilization

In establishing or improving ABE/CP&A, the following should be considered concerning the frequency with which community resources are utilized:

- Care should be taken to avoid extensive use of any one person or organizations; and
- If qualified volunteers, individually or representing an organization, have agreed to participate, but are not given the opportunity, they may lose interest.

Orientation and Placement of Resource Persons

Volunteers require an orientation that provides general informaton on the following:

1. Philosophy, purpose, and importance of cooperative arrangements in adult basic education;
2. Goals and objectives of the program;
3. State and school distrtict/CBO policies concerning ABE community resource persons;
4. Roles, duties and responsibilites of resource persons;
5. Orientation on-site including introduction to staff, facility, pertinent policies, rules and procedures; and
6. Professional ethics, including confidentiality and recommended attire.

The placement process in a cooperative arrangement focuses on matching a community resource person with a special assignment. Among the factors considered in making this match are the person's skills and interests, time requirements, scheduling, travel distance and potential transportation problems. The placement of community volunteers can be facilitated by maintaining a file of, or guide on, resource persons and agencies. If available, the staff should be provided with copies of the guide or have access to the file.

Contact with community resources can be made directly by teachers or program operators. The program operator, however, is in the best position to monitor the utilization of resource persons and ensure that no individual receives an excessive number of requests from staff.

Community Advisory Committee

Both in theory and in practice, ABE advisory committees can be a primary community influence for success and growth of programs in adult basic education. Their role in cooperative planning was discussed in a previous section.

The advisory committee approach plays an equally important role in establishing ABE cooperative arrangements. In addition to providing assistance in recruitment, supportive services, increased operating funds, and program visibility, a community advisory group can facilitate cooperative arrangements in the activities listed below:

- React to issues and concerns regarding program operation;
- Provide input into the basic decisions regarding the program;
- React to concepts, practices and policies proposed regarding cooperative arrangements;
- Improve communication between the program, students, and the broader community;
- Identify strategies for building program support in the business, industry, and labor communities;
- Encourage the cooperation of business and industry to provide work experiences and internships for students;
- Assist in identifying work experience sites;
- Secure funding to assist school or CBO staff to attend professional workshops, meetings, seminars;
- Arrange for plant visits and other field trips;
- Obtain instructional supplies and equipment;
- Evaluate the program and make recommendations for improvement;
- Evaluate facilities, equipment, and student work and recommend equipment and space needed, particularly in new programs;
- Assist in surveys;
- Identify skills needed by graduates;
- Provide jobs for graduates;
- Serve as, or arrange for, guest instructors;
- Assist in assessing labor market needs, interests, and conditions;
- Assist in assessing student needs, interests, and abilities;
- Develop career and consumer related curriculum;

- Identify potential solutions to problems that emerge;
- Arrange for in-service workshops or meetings; and
- Review coordinating techniques involving community resource persons.

Community "intervention" in adult basic education in the form of an advisory committee takes into account the need for balance between the consumer group and the program administration.

1. The advisory group should not be a "rubber stamping" group, but must be actively involved.
2. Lay persons and program operators must work on an equal basis and on all phases of the program, because
   a. Input from all parties lessens errors,
   b. A committee can exert influence on, and seek assistance from, the employment sector and other community groups, and
   c. Both lay persons and program operators have areas of expertise.

Simple logic dictates that those directing ABE programs must know where they want to go, and what they want to do, before they can best determine how it can be done. In other words, those operators who want productive advisory committees must give serious thought to what needs to be accomplished before determining the structure, members, and activities of the committeee.

Individuals who already have ABE advisory committees are challenged to view them in a new light. Advisory committees indeed seem to be "a good idea." Including students, faculty, administrators, employers, and representatives of other community groups, implies that efforts are being made to improve communication among these parties. It is through such broad-based support that applications for funding ABE programs may be strengthened.

Additional Considerations in Developing Cooperative Arrangements

1. **Industry-Education Councils** — ABE program operators can establish and improve cooperative arragements with the business/industry/education/labor/government/professional leadership in the community through linkage with an industry-education council (IEC). In New York State, 23 IECs serve 70 percent of the state's population, primarily in labor-intensive areas such as Buffalo, Rochester, and Long Island. A few

have been in existence for more than 10 years; others have been in operation for only a few months.

Most councils are affiliated with Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). All have received partial support from state vocational education funds and have at least one full-time industry-education coordinator. Additional operating funds come from local school districts and the private sector. The purpose of the councils is to improve coordination and cooperation among industry and schools, with an emphasis on easing the transition from school to work, an important aspect of an ABE program.

ABE directors and program advisory committees can explore work education related activities for ABE students by using IECs as resources for occupational information systems, career planning and exploration, work experience programs, economic education, industry internships, staff and curriculum development, school-industry staff exchange programs, school based job placement, and industry-sponsored educational materials.

Providing ABE Services for Cooperating Organizations —

A number of organizations contributing volunteer resources to adult basic education can utilize ABE services to meet organizational needs. By undertaking a collaborative arrangement with an organization which needs ABE for its clients, the ABE program can help that organization improve its service.

Likewise, in developing such a relationship the program operator gains access to a service which, by benefiting adult learners, assists his/her program to do a more effective job. The program operator and staff can offer their expertise to other agencies on selecting and interpreting test results for use with undereducated adults. They can assist in pre- and in-service training of staff of other agencies. Further, providing free testing for agencies that refer clients to an ABE program is another reciprocal activity.

Co-sponsored/referral arrangements for specific categories of community based organizations:

- **Service-Oriented Agencies** — ABE program operators have an opportunity to collaborate with organizations involved in welfare assistance, health care and job placement since adult basic education complements agency goals. For example, ABE supports the Employment Service function

by helping unemployed persons become employable. Co-sponsorships or referral arrangements with these agencies are enhanced when the organization has clients who could benefit from ABE, but lacks budget support, authorization or expertise to conduct its own program.

Also, a testing service available to service-oriented agencies through an ABE program offers an opportunity for recruiting students.

- **Custodial Agencies** — ABE co-sponsorships are available through jails, prisons, and mental hospitals, all entailing complex negotiations and a significant allocation of time.
- **Hospitals and Private Sector Organizations** — an ABE program has potential for non-English speaking or under-educated, unskilled workers in hospitals where reading safety or patient care regulations is necessary. Hospitals support releasing employees with pay to attend co-sponsored classes. Small and large business organizations having a need for employees to read safety warnings and, in some instances, follow precise directions are prospects for a co-sponsored program.

Retention and Recognition of Community Resource Persons

Initiating ABE cooperative planning and cooperative arrangements can mark the beginning of a long and rewarding relationship for all parties involved, or it can represent the start of a short and unproductive experience for the resource person or organization. Follow-up contacts with the community resources involved in the program are essential to their long-term retention. However, an on-going effort to reenforce the cooperative arrangement and recognize the contribution of individual volunteers or organizations is a priority to the retention of ABE community resources.

A major factor in retaining volunteers is structuring the environment within the program so it will contribute to the satisfaction gained from participating in adult basic education. Another key ingredient for sustaining cooperative arrangements is to recognize and appreciate volunteer service. Some informal methods used for this purpose are:

- Requesting advice on problems;
- Expanding the responsibilities of volunteers commensurate with

their capabilities and interests;

- Sharing items of interest in books, magazines, journals;
- Inviting them to attend staff meetings;
- Providing lunch or refreshments;
- Alerting them to upcoming activities which may be of interest;
- Saying "Thank you," "You did a great job," "The students appreciate your help," etc.

Some examples of formal recognition for community participation in cooperative planning and cooperative arrangements are:

- Awarding special citations for outstanding achievements;
- Scheduling community-wide recognition events;
- Publishing a "recognition" edition of newsletters;
- Providing budget support for attending workshops or conferences;
- Conducting an annual awards program;
- Awarding plaques to co-sponsoring groups, businesses or organzations.

When the services are provided by an agency or business, the organization, along with the individual volunteer, should be recognized.

IV. A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION SYSTEM

Cooperative planning and arrangements in adult basic education must include a comprehensive evaluation system. The concept of accountability is inherent in evaluation and community involvement is fundamental to accountability. An ABE advisory committee assists in planning, implementing, and coordinating adult basic education programs.

Program evaluations should be designed to provide information on which to base decisions concerning program operations and to demonstrate the impact of the program. The evaluation process is a component of the management system with the underlying purpose of improving program performance. Educators involved in adult basic education must constantly seek feedback concerning the effectiveness of what they are doing. This type of monitoring provides information to decision-makers at all levels.

Evaluation must be viewed as a dynamic activity. Objectives must be reviewed and updated periodically, as well as the tests and other procedures used to measure them. Criteria must be re-examined and re-evaluated over time, as more data are accumulated. The community can contribute to a sound evaluation system through the advisory committee

which represents a public feedback system. Committee members with a background in management information systems and managing by objectives can be particularly effective in planning the evaluation by:

- Specifying what is to be evaluated,
- Designing the evaluation plan,
- Implementing the plan, and
- Reporting the findings.

In addition to this approach, there is a public information-accountability model that could be adapted to the evaluation process. This is a process that informs the community about program plans via public media. It includes regular reports to the public on program progress and involves the broader community in rating how well the program seems to have accomplished what it set out to do.

Public evaluation is basically unique because it is a way of giving taxpayers information they have never before received. Evaluation information has traditionally tended to rise in the system; that is, it is produced by professionals in evaluation for experts, such as program management and funding agencies. Public evaluation is a dramatic reversal of this flow in which evaluative reports are presented in clear, understandable terms directly to the public.

This community based model has considerable potential for use in adult basic education. Most program operators, however, would agree that its utility as an evaluation technique depends on the manner in which the program is developed. If community representatives on an advisory committee, for example, are asked to judge how well an ABE program has accomplished its goals, it is almost assured that the outcome will be valuable to those persons served. If not, its worth in advancing a community effort would be questionable, if not counterproductive.

Therefore, a collaborative effort in developing a comprehensive evaulation system will provide information to answer such questions as:

- Was the ABE program worthwhile?
- How is the program progressing?
- Is everyone meeting the expectations of the program?
- Is the particular program really needed or would another do a better job?
- Did the program accomplish what the planners said it would accomplish?

It is appropriate to involve the public in the evaluation process as often and in as many ways as possible. Success requires commitment and commitment demands ownership. Prerequisites to ownership are thorough, first-hand involvement as well as a self-perceived ability for significant contribution.

Community volunteers can also help in developing a sound evaluation system. The challenge for the program operator is to devise the means by which these community resource persons may be used. This effort will go far toward assuring that evaluation and accountability are an integral part of the process and that the community assumes its proper role in that process.

V. SUMMARY

ABE-community cooperative planning and cooperative arrangements provide a vehicle for expanding the resource base for programs without a corresponding increase in expenditures. A well organized, coordinated approach to utilizing community resources in adult basic education can improve capability to meet client needs more effectively.

These arrangements can enhance the accessibility of adult basic education for those who require special services and activities. By allowing the broader community to participate in program planning and implementation, adult basic education can demonstrate its willingness to serve community needs and be accountable for the results produced.

An advisory committee provides the catalyst for real community based adult basic education. Community participation in program planning and evaluation produces better decisions and better decisions result in better programs. Program operators should be aware that advisory committee activities truly reflect community desires and should not "rubber stamp" the program operator's ideas. The advisory committee represents a mechanism for increased cooperation and communication between the ABE program and local agencies.

Following these suggestions will avoid a major problem involving what is not a lack of volunteer services, but rather a lack of coordination of these resources. An ABE advisory committee can provide the structure for improved, effective community cooperation.

The principles, processes and techniques for establishing and improving ABE cooperative planning and cooperative arrangements described in this handbook reflect education-community joint efforts which have proved to be successful in school district and CBO settings, particularly in urban areas. It is hoped that the information provided has given the ABE practitioners a framework for better utilization of all community resources.